

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMCONSUL BELIZE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6500

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

S E C R E T BELIZE 658

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, US, UK, BH, GT

SUBJECT: UK GOVERNOR REACTS TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S OASGA
SPEECH

REFS: (A) BELIZE 601 (B) STATE 159368

1. IT MAY OR MAY NOT BE SOME SORT OF STRAW IN THE WIND,
BUT WE CANNOT HELP BUT BE INTERESTED BY THE VERY STRONG,
POSITIVE REACTION OF GOVERNOR MCENTEE TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S
OASGA SPEECH. ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS, MCENTEE HAS
DISCUSSED HIS BELIEF THAT THIS PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT REPRESENTS
A VERY SIGNIFICANT AND IMPORTANT CHANGE OF DIRECTION IN
US POLICY TOWARDS BELIZE AND EQUALLY THAT, IT SHOWS A NEW
AND GREATER US INVOLVEMENT IN THE MATTER. HE STATES THIS
OPINION SHARED BY HMG IN LONDON, AS WELL.

2. I HAVE TOLD HIM THAT WHILE I AGREE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH
WAS A CLEAR CUT STATEMENT I DID NOT SEE IT AS A MAJOR RPT
MAJOR SHIFT LEADING TO INCREASED US INVOLVEMENT IN THE
BELIZE ISSUE, I SAID I FELT US POLICY, AS I UNDERSTOOD IT,
HAS ALWAYS BEEN "A WILLINGNESS TO JOIN IN THE EFFORT TO FIND
PEACEFUL AND JUST SOLUTIONS" TO PROBLEMS SUCH AS BELIZE.

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WHILE APPRECIATING MCENTEE'S PRAISE FOR STATEMENT, I HAVE
TRIED TO TEMPER HIS ENTHUSIASM. THERE HAS BEEN AN ENORMOUS
AMOUNT OF FAVORABLE AND EXPECTANT COMMENTARY ON PRESIDENT'S
SPEECH; FOR EXAMPLE, IT WAS PLAYED NOT ONCE BUT TWICE OVER
RADIO BELIZE, NEWSPAPERS HAVE PRAISED IT, PREMIER AT 4 JULY
RECEPTION IN MY QUARTERS AGAIN HEAPED PRAISE ON IT AS DID
SEVERAL OTHER GOB OFFICIALS. THEY ALL ARE EXPECTING MIRACLES

WHICH, I FEAR, ARE GOING TO BE HARD TO FIND.

3. SINCE MY ARRIVAL HERE, I HAVE NOTED MCENTEE'S NOT ALWAYS SUBTLE COMMENTS ALONG LINES THAT BELIZE IS A MATTER IN WHICH USG WILL, PERFORCE, HAVE TO PLAY AN EVER GROWING ROLE AND IS, EQUALLY, ONE IN WHICH HMG MAY HAVE TO PLAY A DECLINING ROLE. HE PLAYS THIS TUNE ON DIFFERENT INSTRUMENTS. AN EARLY LINE TO ME WAS THAT BRITAINS ROLE IN NATO IS SACRED AND THAT BELIZE WOULD HAVE TO COME IN SECOND IN CASE A CHOICE HAD TO BE MADE. A GOOD ENOUGH ARGUMENT AND YET THE MOD IN LONDON IS ASSIGNING TO BELIZE A REGIMENT OF GURKHA TROOPS WHICH CANNOT BE ASSIGNED TO NATO BECAUSE, SO I AM TOLD, THEY ARE UNACCEPTABLE TO SOME NATO MEMBERS AS BEING "MERCENARIES". IT IS ALL, I SUPPOSE, A MATTER OF RESOURCE UTILIZATION, YET IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE KOSB'S HAVE COME HERE DIRECT FROM NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE WORCESTERSHIRE AND SHERWOOD FOREST RANGERS, DUE TO ROTATE IN NEXT MONTH, ARE COMING FROM THE UK. IT IS ALSO OBVIOUS THAT SENIOR UK OFFICERS HERE, WHILE ADMITTING OF THE EXPENSE, ARE DELIGHTED TO HAVE AN UNRIVALED TRAINING OPPORTUNITY.

4. GOVERNOR AND CINC'S NEXT ARGUMENT IS ALONG THE "IT WILL BE YOUR PROBLEM SOONER OR LATER DUE TO YOUR HISTORICAL ROLE IN CENTRAL AMERICA" SORT OF APPROACH. AGAIN, THERE IS SOME MERIT IN WHAT HE SAYS BUT CANNOT A COUNTER ARGUMENT BE MADE, NAMELY THAT IT IS BRITAIN'S EQUALLY HISTORICAL ROLE TO
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RESOLVE COMPLEXITIES OF HER OWN MAKING?

5. AN FINALLY, THERE IS THE CUBANS ARE COMING ARGUMENT WHICH MCENTEE USUALLY TIES TO THE HISTORICAL ROLE THEORY AND OVER WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY HAD A SLIGHT DIFFERENCE OF OPINION (REF A). WE HERE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE PRICE WILL BE PRUDENT IN HIS DEALINGS WITH CUBA. THERE IS TOO MUCH AT STAKE FOR HIM TO GAMBLE ON THIS ONE UNTIL THE FUTURE BECOMES MUCH CLEARER THAN IT IS RIGHT NOW.

6. THE GOVERNOR AND I DUSCUSS THIS MATTER QUITE REGULARLY ON A MOST AMICABLE BASIS. I FEAR THAT WE ARE UNABLE TO CONVINCE EACH OTHER OF THE INDESTRUCTABILITY OF OUR ARGUMENT. PERHAPS, IN BELIZE WHERE THINGS SOMETIMES SEEM BIGGER THAN THEY ACTUALLY ARE, WE TEND TO EXAGGERATE. NEVERTHELESS, I HAVE A FEELING-SOMETIMES AN UNEASY FEELING-THAT BOTH BELIZE HOUSE AND, TO A LESSER DEGREE, FCO MAY BE READING MORE INTO THE OASGA STATEMENT THAN THERE ACTUALLY IS SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY BOTH DEEPLY WANT AN INCREASED US ROLE HERE. TO THIS I CAN ONLY ADD MY PERSONAL BELIEF THAT A SUCCESSFULLY INCREASED US ROLE WILL NOT BE EASILY ARRIVED AT.
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